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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In 2000, at the Millennium Summit, world leaders came together to chart out an ambitious course for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. In the framework of this strong and unequivocal political commitment, Heads of State and Government vowed in particular to make the right to development a reality for everyone and resolved to create an environment conducive to sustainable development and the elimination of poverty. They further committed themselves to the achievement by 2015 of concrete and measurable goals, known as the Millennium Development Goals. Achievement of those goals, which are based on the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, was thought necessary to undergird the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development. World leaders understood that societies could not thrive if their health was threatened by preventable communicable diseases, their children lacked basic education, their young people lacked opportunities and their women empowerment. Nor would populations prosper if we continued to delay action to put our development courses on a path ensuring environmental sustainability.

2. In 2005, at the World Summit, world leaders recognized, inter alia, the vital role played by the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields in shaping a broad development vision and in identifying commonly agreed objectives, which had contributed to improving human life in

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different parts of the world (see General Assembly resolution 60/1). Although they were encouraged by the reductions in poverty registered in some countries, they remained concerned about the slow and uneven progress towards poverty eradication and the realization of other development goals in some regions. At the same time, world leaders underscored the interdependent nature of the modern world and reaffirmed their commitment to the global partnership for development set out in the Millennium Declaration,[1] the Monterrey Consensus[2] and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.[3]

3. Today, as we face a global economy weakened by the financial crisis and we witness the ongoing erosion of the gains made in improving lives, especially those of the most vulnerable, we must make sustainable development our central goal. As measures are taken to overcome the crisis, we must find effective ways of securing the progress we have already made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

4. Concerned about the effects of the crisis, the President of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly and I co-hosted a high-level event in 2008 to raise awareness about the challenges still remaining to reach the Millennium Development Goals and to elicit further commitments to close the funding gap. The event successfully engaged Governments, civil society and the private sector, generating significant pledges to, among other things, ensure food security, boost education and combat malaria. The event proved that it is important to take stock of where we stand, to identify the obstacles remaining and to provide concrete proposals to surmount them and accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Encouraged by the momentum created thus far, I recommended that Member States consider holding a review conference with all stakeholders in 2010, to evaluate international performance in fulfilling commitments to deliver on the Goals.

5. In its resolution 63/302, the General Assembly decided to convene in 2010, at the commencement of its sixty-fifth session, a high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly with the participation of heads of State and Government on dates to be decided by the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

6. Being held just five years before the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals and at a time of uncertainty regarding the soundness of the world economy, this high-level plenary meeting will be an event of decisive importance. It will build, inter alia, on the outcomes of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development)[4] and the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development[5] to reinforce the global partnership for development and support strategies to prevent backsliding and

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[1] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[3] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[4] See General Assembly resolution 63/239, annex.

[5] See General Assembly resolution 63/303, annex.

accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

7. Also in resolution 63/302, the General Assembly requested that I submit a report at the beginning of its sixty-fourth session to serve as basis for further consultations on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting. The present report is submitted in response to that request. Bearing in mind the points made above, the Assembly may wish to ensure that the scope of the proposed meeting is consistent with the Millennium Declaration and has the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals at its core.

8. In accordance with resolution 55/162, I will present a comprehensive report on progress achieved towards implementing the Millennium Declaration. I propose to focus that report on the results and benchmarks achieved, the identification of gaps in implementation and strategies for reducing them. That report together with a special edition of the annual report on the Millennium Development Goals and the report by the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force could provide the needed background documentation for the 2010 high-level plenary meeting.

9. The recommendations made in the present report are based on the experience accumulated to date in organizing the 2000 Millennium Summit, the 2005 World Summit and other special sessions, high-level dialogues and other meetings of the General Assembly.

II. Modalities, format and organization of the high-level plenary meeting

A. Duration and timing

10. Given that the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly will start on 14 September 2010 and that, in its resolution 63/302, the Assembly decided to convene a high-level plenary meeting at the commencement of that session, the Assembly may wish to consider holding the high-level plenary meeting over three days choosing one of the following three options: (a) from Saturday, 18 September to Monday, 20 September, inclusive; (b) on Friday, 17 September, Saturday, 18 September and Monday, 20 September (there would be no meeting on Sunday, 19 September); or (c) from Wednesday, 15 September to Friday, 17 September 2010, inclusive. In all cases, the general debate would commence on Tuesday, 21 September 2010, as already scheduled. Options (a) and (b) are proposed to facilitate the highest possible representation, in a cost-effective manner, at both the high-level plenary meeting and the general debate.

B. Structure and format

11. The General Assembly may wish to structure the high-level plenary meeting around nine plenary meetings, with three held each day in order to accommodate statements by all Member States. Despite this allocation of time, oral statements would have to be kept short on the understanding that Member States might circulate more extensive texts.

12. The Assembly may also wish to consider convening four interactive round-table meetings in parallel to the plenary meetings. The Assembly may wish to decide between the two following options: (a) each of the four round-table meetings could cover the entire agenda of the meeting so as to provide both an integrated view and highlight the interlinkages among the different issues under consideration; or (b) each of the four round-table meetings could focus on a theme reflecting specific development challenges.

13. Following standard practice, the round-table meetings would be closed to the media and the general public.

C. Participation in the plenary meetings

14. In resolution 63/302, the General Assembly decided that the high-level plenary meeting should be held at the level of heads of State and Government. I strongly support that decision and encourage all Member States to participate in the high-level plenary meeting at the highest level.

15. With regard to observer delegations, the Assembly may wish to consider following its established practice.

16. For security reasons and given the space limitations of the United Nations building, the broad participation of civil society is unfortunately not possible. However, I believe that civil society can make a valuable contribution to the preparatory process in terms of both substantive contributions and by raising awareness of the issues. The Assembly, therefore, may wish to hold informal interactive hearings with civil society organizations prior to the high-level meeting.

17. With regard to the participation of civil society in the high-level plenary meeting itself, the General Assembly may wish to adopt the practice followed in the 2005 World Summit. Time permitting, one representative of each of three categories (non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations and the private sector), selected during the preparatory activities for the high-level plenary meeting in consultation with the President of the General Assembly, could be included in the list of speakers for the plenary meetings.

D. Participation in the interactive round-table meetings

18. Should the Assembly decide to convene interactive round-table meetings as in previous high-level meetings, the chairpersons of the round tables would be heads of State and Government and the participation of Member States in each of the round-table meetings would be subject to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Member States would be encouraged to be represented at the highest level.

19. In addition, the Assembly may wish to make specific provisions to allow the participation in the round-table meetings of heads of entities of the United Nations system as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations and the private sector.

20. As in previous meetings of this kind, summaries of the deliberations of the interactive round-table meetings could be presented orally by the chairpersons of the round tables at the concluding plenary meeting of the high-level plenary meeting.

E. Preparatory activities: informal interactive hearings

21. The Assembly may wish to consider organizing informal interactive hearings with civil society organizations prior to the high-level plenary meeting, as was done at the 2005 World Summit. The hearings could take place over the course of two days and include four sessions. As in previous events of this type, the President of the General Assembly would preside over the informal interactive hearings and each session could consist of presentations by invited participants from non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations and the private sector, and include an exchange of views with Member States.

22. The hearings could be open to the participation of accredited representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, Member States and observers of the General Assembly.

23. The Assembly may wish to entrust its President to determine the list of invited participants and the exact format and organization of the hearings, in consultation with Member States and representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, civil society organizations and the private sector.

24. In order to facilitate the participation in the hearings of non-governmental and civil society organizations from developing countries, the Assembly may wish to urge Member States and others to make contributions to a trust fund set up specifically to support this activity.

F. Outcome of the high-level plenary meeting

25. Ten years have passed since world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration and reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit their unwavering resolve to address collectively the global challenges of our time. I cannot urge Member States too strongly to engage constructively and as a matter of priority in the preparation of the 2010 high-level plenary meeting. The decisions they take at this major gathering will indicate whether we remain faithful to the broad multilateral policy framework agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration and follow-up conferences. More specifically, they will determine whether we can achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals by the deadline we have set for ourselves. For that reason, the Assembly may wish to adopt a bold action-oriented political declaration as the outcome of the 2010 high-level plenary meeting so that the meeting not only results in a renewal of existing commitments but can decisively galvanize coordinated action among all stakeholders and elicit the funding necessary to ensure the achievement of all crucial development goals by 2015. Such an outcome should also ensure that further progress can proceed on a solid foundation so as to improve the lives of all people and lift those of the millions living at the bottom. Time is short. We must seize this historic moment to act responsibly and decisively for the common good.